

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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REP. MARKEY (D-MA), SEN. LIEBERMAN (D-CT), SEN. DAYTON (D-MN), AND REP. GEORGE MILLER (D-CA) ANNOUNCE “UDALL-EISENHOWER” WILDERNESS BILL TO PROTECT THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

WASHINGTON, DC – Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), Senator Mark Dayton (D-MN), and Representative George Miller (D-CA) will announce today that they are introducing the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act of 2005 to preserve the Arctic coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness that cannot be spoiled by harmful oil and gas drilling. The Udall-Eisenhower Act is bi-partisan legislation, with Nancy Johnson (R-CT) the lead co-sponsor in the House and Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) in the Senate. In 1960, Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower set aside the core of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In 1980 Democratic Representative Morris Udall led the Congress in doubling the size of the Refuge and protecting this pristine wilderness from oil drilling.

At today's press conference announcing the introduction of the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act, Rep. Markey will make the following statement:

“Today I will introduce in the House, and Joe Lieberman will introduce in the Senate, the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act of 2005 to provide wilderness protection to the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. These are bipartisan bills – Nancy Johnson is the lead cosponsor in the House, and Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) in the Senate, and we expect to have well over one hundred cosponsors joining us on the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness bill today.

“In 1960, Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower set aside the core of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In 1980 Democratic Representative Morris Udall led the Congress in doubling the size of the Refuge and protecting this pristine wilderness from oil drilling. In 2005, we will preserve and protect, honor and defend, for our children and their grandchildren, this last untouched Arctic ecosystem, and we will win.

“To quote Mo Udall: ‘In our lifetime, we have few opportunities to shape the very Earth on which our descendants will live their lives. In each generation, we have carved up more and more of our once-great natural heritage. There ought to be a few places left in the world the way the Almighty made them.’

“The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a national treasure. It does not belong to the oil companies -- it does not belong to a political party -- it does not belong to one state. It belongs to the public, to be managed for the enjoyment of future generations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service calls the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge the ‘biological heart of the Refuge.’ If the drillers get their way, a refuge for wildlife will become something else – a place for caribou, grizzlies, polar bears and wolves to practice their social skills with oil riggers, pipelines, roads, pumping stations, bulldozers, helicopters, airstrips, and everything else necessary for a state-of-the-art ‘environmentally-conscious’ oil field. Like their counterparts in the zoo, the wildlife will be required to adapt to living in an oil field, and they will be ‘wildlife’ no more. A place that has been ‘forever wild’ will be gone -- gone forever -- never to be retrieved.

“If Congress authorizes drilling in the Refuge, it will scar an untouched landscape, evict wildlife from its traditional habitats, turn tundra potholes for ducks into catch basins for drilling wastes, and provide a precedent to invade every other wildlife refuge in the United States of America. Let’s be clear – if we want to be able to protect the wildlife refuge system later, we must protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge now.

“The debate over drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is surreal when you consider that we are sending our young men and women abroad to shed their blood in the Middle East oilfields while artificially subsidizing the consumption of oil at home as if it were an infinite resource.

“Let me cite just one obscene example. The Administration’s current energy policy provides \$35,000 in tax deductions for the purchase of a Hummer, but a mere \$2,000 for the purchase of a hybrid vehicle. A hybrid gets 50 miles-per-gallon, a Hummer gets 10 miles-per-gallon. Thus it is the official energy policy of the Bush Administration that you should buy a Hummer, not a hybrid.

“That is why the Energy Information Administration projects that the passage of the Administration’s Energy Act will result in a drastic increase in our foreign oil dependence – from 65 percent today to 80 percent in 2025.

“This is madness.”

“The United States consumes 25 percent of the world’s oil but controls only 3 percent of the world’s reserves. 76 percent of those reserves are controlled by the OPEC cartel; that is our weakness. We are a technological superpower. That is our strength.

“Three quarters of our oil is used for transportation. If we improve the average fuel economy of cars, mini-vans, and SUV’s by just 3 miles per gallon, we save more oil within ten years than would ever be produced from drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. But we can do much better than that. Technology already exists that will allow us to dramatically increase fuel economy, not just by 3 mpg, but by 15 mpg or more – five times the amount the industry could possibly drill out of the Refuge.

“Let us join the American people in saying, unequivocally, that there are places that are so rare, so special, so unique that we simply will not drill there as long as alternatives exist.

“We do not dam Yosemite Valley for hydropower. We do not strip mine Yellowstone for coal. And we should not drill for oil and gas in the Arctic Refuge!

“Thank you for your support.”

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